

SACRAL HARLOTRY. CHILD
SACRIFICE

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his food supply. It is impossible to tell when this interest would "begin/" but it would become intense whenever the number of men was great in proportion to the food supply. Hence the rainfall, the course of the seasons, the prevalence of winds, the conjunction of astronomical phenomena with spawning or fruit seasons, and the habits of plants and animals caught the feeble attention of savage man and taught him facts of nature, through his eagerness to get signs of coming plenty or suggestions as to his own plans and efforts. Attention has been called to a very interesting fact about the fructification of the domesticated date palm wherever oasis cultivation prevailed in western Asia.¹ The fructification must be artificial. Men carry the pollen to the female plant and adopt devices to distribute it on the wind or by artificial contact. At the present time this is done by attaching a bunch of the male seed on a branch to windward.² Tylor first suggested that certain ancient pictorial representations are meant to depict the work of artificial fructification as carried on by mythological persons, —cherubim, who represent the winds.³ The function of the wind distributing the seed is divine work. The tree is of such supreme value ⁴ that the well living of men depends on this operation. The sex conjunction therefore was the most important and beneficent operation in nature, and correct knowledge of it was the prime condition of getting an abundant food supply. Man followed the operation with all the interest of the food supply and all the awe of religion. It is certain that his interest in it was "innocent." He

began to
 mythologize about it on account of the grand
 elements of wel-
 fare, risk, and skill which were in it. A parallel case
 is furnished
 by the treatment accorded to rice by the
 Javanese. It is to
 them the great article of food supply. They
 endow it with a
 soul and ascribe to it sex passion. They have
 ceremonies by
 which to awaken this passion in the rice as a
 means of increas-
 ing their own food supply. The ceremonies consist
 in sympathetic
 magic by men and women at night.⁵

¹ Barton, *Semitic Origins*, 78. ³ *Proc. Soc. Bibl Archeol*, 1890,
 XII, 383.

² Wellsted, *Arabia*, II, 12. * Herodotus, I, 193.

⁵ Wilken, *Volkenkunde*, 550.